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ABSTRACT

In four brief pamphlets, background information concerning aspects of the provision of day care services for infants and young children is directed to (1) policy makers, (2) mass media specialists, (3) academic level workers and professionals, and (4) nurses, midwives, social workers, teachers, and parents. Topics discussed include child development, health and socialization, costs of child care, the basis for establishing child care programs, the organization of day care programs, community responsibility for the organization of day care, and types of day care programs. (RH)

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International Children's Centre

1980

INFANT NURSERIES AND DAY CARE

A DOCUMENT FOR ACADEMIC LEVEL WORKERS AND PROFESSIONALS

The problem will be considered from two points of view :

- in the life of a young child, who is going to spend most of his waking life away from his parents, who are after all the people who are absolutely essential for him;

- in the life of an adult or of a couple, who entrust their young child to another person while they are engaged in a professional activity.

Its duration may extend from the end of the mother's maternity leave until the child enters the school system, that is, from the age of 3-4 months to 3-4 years according to the country.

Four protagonists are involved :

A. The parents
B. The child
C. The person(s) who look after the child in the parents' absence.
D. The community (State, municipal authorities, etc.) which tries to organize different methods of day-care.

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This document will not attempt to describe everything that is done, but to outline the principles which it is essential to safeguard in order to enable a child to develop harmoniously, that is, to become an autonomous and responsible human being, capable of establishing a series of satisfactory interrelationships with others.

How this is worked out in practice will of course vary according to the context and the resources available to each country or community.

Let us begin by describing the various types of day-care. The problem will be considered later in this document at the level of the main protagonists involved. In the end, several considerations will be made on the basis of investigation data.

I - DESCRIPTION

Day-care may be organized in four different ways :

1. The children lead a community life (usually between 50 and 120 together) under the responsibility of auxiliary child welfare workers and one or two child welfare workers who coordinate the center as a whole : these are community day-care centers. The children are divided into small groups of the same age or of mixed ages.

Some countries, such as Czechoslovakia for instance, which had developed "weekly" day-care centers, and "permanent" nurseries (in which children spend the night), are now reducing the number of such centers, as they have found that they have negative repercussions on the children.

Advantages

- competent staff;
- medical supervision (a pediatrician is attached to the center and sees the children regularly);
- a satisfactorily clean environment;
- an organization planned to meet the children's needs;
- an early opportunity to become acquainted with others - both adults and children - and thus to acquire valuable experience.

Disadvantages

These conditions are not always met, and people may labour under a delusion about the quality of the care given to the children;

- it is difficult for every child to be given the personal care he requires;
- the living conditions are sometimes hard for very young children : noise, the difficulty of respecting sleeping and resting habits, aggressivity of other children, etc.

2. The children spend the day in the home of a mother's helper, who may be independent and may or may not be approved by the social services, or who may be part of a family day-care center.

In the first case, it may happen that a child is looked after by the week in the home of a mother's helper, only returning to his parents at weekends or when they have free days, for the parents this is a method of day-care, but it places the child in an entirely different position, very far away from his parents, it is not a question of a family but of particular difficulties and organization needed for this involves)

The family day-care center is based on the principle of [illegible] in which the children are entrusted to a [illegible] in the home of one of the [illegible] the organization of the day-care center and in the [illegible] attending the nursery school.

3. The children are entrusted to a member of the family - a grandmother, a sister, etc. - or to a friend or a neighbour, in the home of the child or of the person concerned.

This type of day-care is much more frequent than might be supposed in Western countries and in some countries where the

Advantages

- [illegible] from the medical point of view, since a pediatrician or the staff does the children regularly, there is less risk of infection than in a community day-care center, and children whose health is delicate needs [illegible] to this type of day-care
- a personal relationship
- a better chance of following each child's daily [illegible] (eating of the daily routine), meals, sleep, activity).

Disadvantages

- [illegible]
- [illegible]
- [illegible]
- [illegible]
- [illegible]

The quality of care depends essentially on the person [illegible] and the [illegible] confided to the person in charge; for this reason a family day-care center is, on the one hand, more [illegible] than a mother's help, on the other, [illegible] than a mother's help in relation to the child and his parents.

The operating costs of these two types of day-care centers are very much the same if they are well equipped. On the other hand, the cost of capital outlay for community day-care centers is very much higher.

Advantages

- the mother often has greater confidence in this type of arrangement;
- ad hoc arrangements can be made according to the child's needs;
- this may be a good solution for a child who is

extended family is considered as the natural environment for the child.

Thus, in Indonesia, when both parents work, they often entrust someone they know to live in their home until the child is old enough to go to school. The need for day-care centers is not very much felt in that part of the world.

[illegible]

[illegible]

IT IS THEREFORE IMPOSSIBLE TO ESTABLISH A RANKING AMONG THE VARIOUS TYPES OF DAY-CARE THAT EXIST, EACH WITH ITS ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES. VERY RARELY DO THEY ALL CO-EXIST, NOR ARE THEY ALL EASILY INTERCHANGEABLE FOR USE BY THE PARENTS.

II - THE PROTAGONISTS

A. THE PARENTS

A mother often feels very ambivalent when faced with the choice of having her child looked after or not. This results from a contradiction of needs :

sensitive to adult relationships.

Disadvantages

- the arrangement is an informal one between the parents and the person concerned; in case of difficulty there is no third person to fall back on for help, and this may lead to a breakdown in the arrangement and to changes for the child;
- there may be considerable rivalry between the mother and the person concerned.

Advantage

[illegible]

Disadvantages

[illegible]

- on the one hand, apart from the need to work for financial reasons, and the fear of being unable to take up her professional activity again when her child needs her less, she is afraid of isolation, routine, and a lack of opportunities for contact with others and development of her personality if she stays at home to bring up her child; she may want to keep up the image of an "emancipated" modern woman; or she may sometimes shrink from a face-to-face relationship with her child who is already asserting his personality, for fear of not being equal to her task;

- on the other hand, she whishes to maintain the close relationship with her child and be sure of being a good mother. It would indeed seem that a mother always suffers from being separated from her baby :

  . she is frustrated by not making the most of the pleasure a baby gives (physical contact, watching its progress, sharing emotions, happiness and unhappiness, etc.). When her maternity leave is over she will have to break this relationship which gives both of them so much pleasure;

  . she is afraid of loosing touch with her child and dreads that he may become attached to someone else;

  . she is afraid of not providing him with everything he needs : a feeling of competence develops with the close relationship of looking after a child. Yet this close relationship has to be built up during the short time they spend together, while the mother is also tired out and rushed by her other tasks in the home and her role as a wife and a woman. If she does not manage to build it up, she develops a feeling of guilt.

All this is felt more or less deeply depending on :

- the personality of the father and the mother, and their personal experience with regard to their parents and their own childhood;
- the quality of the relationship between the two parents;
- the concept of the woman and parental roles in the couple (there may be harmony or divergence of views), in the extended family (the father may be in agreement but his own parents criticize the mother for going out to work), and in the social environment to which they belong;
- material living conditions (fatigue, time taken in travelling to and from work, the interest of the professional activity, and financial means).

The mother's suffering is often hidden, unavowed, and considered as a weakness, although it fills her life (and is frequently admitted much later, sometimes when a second or third child is born and she finally gives up working).

Thus, most women feel it deeply :

. Some of them face it with maturity.

. Others have more difficulty in doing so, and react by :

- remaining unhappy themselves (frustrated and guilty);

- sometimes by ignoring the child's needs or by trying not to think about him (many women refuse to think about what their child is doing when he is away from them). It is surprising to find that some experienced parents do not realize how unsatisfactory their child's living conditions are during the day.

- or, on the other hand, projecting their perpetual dissatisfaction on the person who looks after their child, towards whom they behave in a fussy and demanding way and are never satisfied.

Most of them could usefully be helped to become aware of these contradictions and these incursions, by sharing and understanding their suffering, and clarifying the position of each member of the couple.

It is clearly necessary to intervene at this level which underlies their behaviour. Otherwise, we remain on the surface, forming our own opinions, and cannot really be of help.

If they could thus overcome their contradictions, many parents would once again be ready and able to take responsibility for their children.

People who are unstable or neurotic, or who suffered from severe deprivation during their childhood, require permanent and more specialized support. They would probably have difficulties with their children in any case, and here a preventive role can be very effective.

It would then be possible :

- to get them to participate actively in organizing day-care, thus bringing them to realize by experience that it is their concern.

- also to help them deal with their child's "normal" difficulties, connected on the one hand with the very circumstances of day-care, and on the other with normal problems of development; this can be done through individual communication as well as through meetings of parents.

Help, education and training of parents is everywhere, and to an increasing extent, considered to be an essential task of day-care centers.

In conclusion, the organization of any type of day-care should always be accompanied by arrangements for support to the parents.

B. THE CHILD

There is very little mention of the child in studies made on the subject, though he is in fact at the heart of the matter, and will benefit or suffer from the situation.

All young children need :

- to experience the basic, unique and specific relationship with each of their parents, which by its quality gives them the essential feeling of satisfaction and fulfilment;

- to have stability in their environment, in order to build up the points of reference required to differentiate constructively between themselves and the outside world;

- to invest their budding capabilities in corresponding activities.

In many developing countries, since there are only very limited facilities for organizing day-care centers, those responsible call on the parents to help in their equipment (e.g. mobile day-care centers in India, kindergartens in Togo, Chad, etc.). From this beginning, many activities can develop.

The sum of these three conditions provides them with the security which is essential to them for a full development. Their importance during the first few years of life is highlighted in all modern psychological studies; if anyone of the three is missing, serious disturbance results.

Intelligence, more especially, is a potentiality which only develops in the presence of sufficient emotional and physical security (feeding being included as an essential element of physical security), and in an environment which provides adequate stimulation.

A child must therefore find all this during the period of day-care. Since he is not in direct contact whit his parents during this time, he needs to feel continuity between them and the person who looks after him - to whom he has been entrusted by his parents and from whom he will be taken away by them in the evening. This person is his point of reference; he is aware of all the care she gives and all the interest she takes in him; she helps him to endure all his grief and suffering; with her he feels safe.

On the contrary, if he feels rivalry among the adults around him, this leads to a split in his personality as he cannot benefit from all his emotional links and is torn between them.

Finally, a child must find around him :

- opportunities for experimenting;
- sources of stimulation;
- respect for his autonomy and for the tempo of his life.

Furthermore, studies have shown that it is important for a child to experience a day-care situation before the age of 6 months, which is the age when objective relationships are established (during the period known as "the anxiety of 8 months old", described by SPITZ). Otherwise he should only start later

Stability implies regularity in the organization of the day-care itself (the person who looks after the child, the places in which he spends his time, the timing of his programme throughout the day, and the attitudes he encounters), and stability in the type of day-care chosen : he should not be changed from one day-care center to another or from one mother's help to another.

In any case, a day-care situation is difficult for a child, and he must be got ready for it by gradual adaptation over a period of several days, during which time care should be taken very early on to explain to him what is going to happen - that his parents are going to entrust him to such and such a

on, when his relationship with his mother is sufficiently interiorized for him to be able to leave her for a whole day without going through the existential anxiety of being abandoned (20-24 months).

If this preparation is not properly carried out, there is no doubt that a child cannot benefit from day-care, and finds it very difficult to bear. In such cases, problems of varying severity may be observed, such as :

- sadness, apathy, lack of dynamism;
- disturbed sleep, lack of appetite, or more serious symptoms;
- slow intellectual or motor development;
- emotional immaturity;
- difficulty in establishing social relationships;
- disorders in investment of aggressivity of a regressive (passivity) or exacerbated type (quarrelsome and destructive behaviour).

On the other hand, if the preparation is properly carried out, day-care will contribute to the child's development, and may even compensate partially for certain family and social deficiencies by offering the security and the stimulation that are lacking and playing a preventive role. It will also be beneficial for physically or mentally handicapped children, giving them valuable contact with "normal" children, and putting them at a remove from their parents with whom a dual relationship often poses problems.

C. THE PEOPLE WHO TEMPORARILY REPLACE THE PARENTS

They have to meet the needs of the child as well as those of the parents. In this difficult task, their skill implies :

- spontaneous affection for and interest in young children, curiosity and interest in the present and future development of the child they are looking after, and knowledge of a child's evolution in order to meet the needs described;

person and that they will come and fetch him in the evenings. If a child is placed without warning in the care of someone he does not know day after day - and time passes slowly for him - his reactions may be spectacular (i.e. screaming, disturbed sleep, or organic disorders) or discrete (i.e. he may smile less, or make less progress in his movements).

- affection for the parents also, as well as a wish to be of service to them and to be able to identify with them in the difficulties they encounter with their child.

- ability to be aware of, and overcome, their feelings in the particular circumstances of looking after other people's children :

  . with regard to the child they may be tempted to regard him/her as their own, for the very reason that they take an interest in him/her and spend so much time with him/her;

  . with regard to the parents : rivalry, opinions, criticisms, demands, a tendency to feel more qualified than them, or refusal to accept the choice they have made.

This implies training which includes not only good knowledge of children, but also of adults, of social relationships, and of different ways of life.

Here we would say a word about the organization of groups of children in a community : in small groups, of the same age or covering a wide range of ages, the main thing seems to be that an adult should be personally responsible for a few children, taking a personal interest in each one, so that every child in the group feels that he or she is the object of the adult's attention. (See Section III : Group composition).

Following the children's progress over a number of years (instead of being attached to a single age-group) strengthens the interest of the adult, and enables the children to experience the maturation of a link with someone other than their parents over a period of years. They are thus spared the expenditure of energy which is always needed to leave someone to whom they were attached and put their trust in someone else whom they have to get to know. This implies that each adult is responsible for a limited number of children. Finally, in a group of more than 8 or 10 in the same place, children under three years of age find it very difficult to build up their

These skills should be practised as part of a personal or community organization which ensures the absence of too great tension, and also ensures interest in the work, since it is in the mutual pleasure of his communication with adults that a child will find the narcissic elements essential for constructive awareness of himself.

The introduction of male staff is becoming common everywhere, although still only on a very limited scale. This seems to be a very positive development both for the children and for the adults.

Noteworthy examples are the LOCZY day-nursery in Budapest, where each educator is responsible for a few children of similar ages from their arrival until their departure from the institution, and the Swedish experiments in which "brother and sister groups" bring together children from seven months to two and a half years, then from two and a half to seven years, under the responsibility of a single person.

There are also recent experiments in which children from seven months to seven years are placed together in the same infancy and early childhood center; the staff follow the children throughout their growing period, and consider this to be a very positive method; there has been a great decrease in absenteeism.

identity, and there is a rapid increase, according to their type of character, in their tendency to withdraw into themselves or to become aggressive.

In individual types of day-care, it is necessary to be careful of the risks of a closed-in life in which stimulation and contact are insufficient, to overcome this problem, such activities as outings, gatherings of mother's helps, or small groups of children playing in the charge of an educator, may be organized.

It is useful for persons directly involved in relationships with children and their parents to work in a team with other people from the outside, such as pediatricians, psychologists, social services, administrative authorities, or staff from other day-care centres. This provides perspective, wider scope, and enrichment which help to give more effective assistance to the families and the children.

D. COMMUNITY RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE ORGANIZATION OF DAY-CARE

With the present evolution in outlook and ways of living, it is essential for the community to organize a sufficient amount of day-care in satisfactory conditions (though this does not exclude individual initiative).

This implies working out the objectives, which may be very varied :

- with regard to the children :
  . meet material needs, that is, ensure the physical "surveillance" of as many children as possible whose mothers work;
  . or arrange very early on for their integration into community life (of the kind that has been developed in China and in Israel);
  . or do one's best to develop the child's personality towards self-assurance, preparing him for becoming responsible and autonomous.

- with regard to the parents :
  . place them in a dependent position, by organizing the care

of their children for them by skilled personnel;
. or consider their participation as the normal thing, with the day-care institutions as "collaborators" with the parents who retain full responsibility for their task towards their children;
. or take the opportunity to educate the parents (examples given).

Ideological viewpoints are brought out clearly, as are concepts with regard to the development of male and female roles, and the organization of life in general (enhancement of the value of work, or a search for other ways of life).

The administrative authorities must bear in mind the triple necessity of ensuring :

- the quality of what is offered to the children;
- the existence of a sufficient number of facilities for day-care;
- a variety of methods of day-care : both parents and children find their security in different solutions, according to their personalities. Costs should be identical in order to guarantee freedom of choice.

The consequences of this organization are not yet clear, but they will influence the future of the whole population.

For this reason, the financial cost, which is obviously high, may be considered as a useful "investment", and is perhaps less than would be the therapeutic care of the disorders resulting from non-observation of these basic principles.

III- RESEARCH ISSUES

A number of research issues continue to be of concern to the academie and professionnal world concerning day-care. Each of these research issues is discussed briefly.

Sweden has made its position clear in this field : the "nursery school" (which takes in very young children in that country) is an instrument available to parents to enable them to take full responsibility for their children.

Although the financial investment is fairly high, it may often be less than it is reported to be, if full use is made of the parents and people in the district, as well as of local products, as has been demonstrated in the mobile day-care centres in India and many other experiments; the quality of the relationship with the children, and giving them simple things to which they are accustomed, is more useful than very sophisticated teaching equipment in luxurious surroundings.

1) Impact of day-care :

Studies over the past 15 years on the impact of day-care on children under the age of three indicate that the day-care experience has neither salutary nor adverse effects on the development of most children. However, for children from low-income families, day-care seems to have an enduring positive effect. In fact, in a longitudinal study of the impact of pre-school programs for infants, toddlers, and preschoolers of some 14 early intervention programs, the findings were remarkably consistent. Children from low-income families benefitted from early intervention programs at whatever age of entrance, whatever length of participation, whatever the context of the program or whatever the location; i.e., center, family day-care, home-based, home and center combination, and the effects lasted throughout the children's lives. The benefits included fewer placements in special education classes; fewer grade failures or retentions in grade; higher achievement test scores by 4th grade; higher intelligence test scores; and more positive attitudes toward achievement. Mothers of these children have higher vocational aspirations for their children than the children do for themselves and act as motivators for their children.

2) Group size and staff/child ratio :

These two aspects are most directly related to the amount and nature of personal attention that caregivers can give children. Evidence shows that small groups of children and caregiver's attention best promote competent child development. Group size should vary according to the ages of the children in care, and whether there are children, such as the handicapped, with special needs. Small groups are especially important for children under age 3. Studies show that smaller groups are consistently associated with better care, more socially active children and higher gains in development. Further, both group size and staff/child ratio are strongly related to quality of care for infants and toddlers. The staff/child ratio for infants should be no more than 4 infants to one staff member. For children 3 to 5 years old, the staff/child ratio should be between 1 to 7 or, at most, 1 to 18. A lead staff person with aides or volunteers is a common pattern used in many child care centers.

3) Level of staff training :

The research data existing on the effects of level of staff training on children is limited. The research on the differential effects of various types of education, credentials, experience, and inservice training on caregiver behavior reveals these things :

a) specific caregiver skills are needed to support the well-being of children;

b) training can be used to promote these skills; and

c) training is essential to refine or improve current caregiver performance in all modes of care. A great deal of research describes the negative effects on children of all ages - and especially on young children - of frequent staff turnover and frequent changes in care-giving environments. Children benefit most from a continuity of staff and a consistency in the environment. Children under 3 need attachment relationships for normal development and stability of care is important to the establishment of such affectional bonds because it allows both children and caregivers to know each other. Children require continuing contact with the same adults in order to develop trust.

4) Age of entry :

There are no research data that specify the earliest age at which a child can be separated from the primary caregiver (usually the mother) for an extended period of time each day without suffering negative developmental consequences. Neither are there research data which indicate the impact of hours in care away from the primary caregiver on child well-being. Several European countries whose policies at one time supported out-of-home care for infants of employed women are increasingly supporting paid maternity leave. In the United States there is a growing debate about what should be the nature of public policy for children under 3 years of age. This debate includes research findings but goes beyond to incorporate general social and economic policies.

5) Parent involvement :

There is a persistent belief that children in day-care benefit from the participation of their parents in the program. Research data on parent involvement in day-care generally indicate relatively low levels of parent participation in such activities as policy planning and budget review. Educational workshops that provide childrearing information appear to be popular among parents. Several research studies show that when parents receive rigorous training in caregiving skills and tutoring techniques, their children show significant social, emotional, and cognitive developmental gains. The parents become more sensitive to their children's needs and interact with their children in cognitively appropriate ways. Parents also frequently show increases in self-esteem and feelings of control in their own lives, findings particularly true among parents with low incomes.

Most parents communicate regularly (one or more times a week) with caregivers, but not necessarily with the same person or, indeed, their own children's caregiver. Frequently the caregiver who works with the child all day leaves before the parents pick up the child. Parents want to talk to caregivers about their children's activities and development, most want to spend time in the setting and work as volunteers. Fewer parents, as well as caregivers, believe parents should make suggestions regarding caregiver practices.

6) Group composition :

Center day-care does not tend to have as large an age mix as family day-care, so the research on group composition is limited to family day-care. Studies indicate that when infants are present, caregivers tend to do less teaching, playing and television watching with the older children. The amount of time the older children spend with peers increases as the caregiver becomes more involved with infants. The children make more attempts at controlling each other. Data suggest that children become more unruly in homes with several 1 - and 2 - years old,

and the caregiver spends more time controlling their behavior and less time in developmental activities with the children. When several preschoolers - 3 to 5 year olds - are present, the caregiver facilitates more language learning activities. When more of the 3 to 5 year olds are present there is more muscle play - climbing, jumping, riding tricycles -. However, the 1 or 2 year olds spend more time alone and receive less caregiver attention when several preschoolers are present. In general, when the age mix is greater, children have more interaction with each other. However, infants receive a considerable amount of attention from caregivers regardless of number and ages of the other children present. Toddlers (1 and 2 years old) are likely to fare best in homes with fewer children but not many of their own age; preschoolers (3-5) are less affected by various age groups, especially when several children of that age are present; older children coming to the home after school tend to have a positive effect on all the children.

IV - CONCLUSION

To have a young child looked after during the day while his parents work is not in itself a right or a wrong solution. It depends on :

- the quality of what is offered to the child;
- the way in which the parents deal with the situation.

These two aspects must be given the most careful consideration : it is essential to realize the risks involved if one is given priority to the detriment of the other.

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INFANT NURSERIES AND DAY CARE

A DOCUMENT FOR POLICY-MAKERS

PS012332

1. Why is there a problem of day-care of children ?

The need to organize services for the day-care of children whose mothers work is not, as is often stated, connected simply with the increase in the number of women who work outside the home.

In any society, indeed, women participate very significantly in productive work, and the role they play in modern society is in no way exceptional from this point of view.

However, in traditional societies, the problem of day-care of children is easily solved within the extended family. The problem has become acute because of changes in family structure, and more particularly the development of the nuclear family (a phenomenon connected, of course, with the processes of urbanization and industrialization).

In industrialized countries, women represent an increasing proportion of the total manpower (between 30 % and nearly 50 % ac-

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Some definitions :

Day-care is an expression used to describe the care of children under the age of three whose mothers work, whether such children are placed during the day in specialized institutions ("day-care centres" or entrusted to families other than their own, sometimes - though not always - submitted to some form of control (training and supervision of foster-mothers, nurses and mother's helps).

For services intended for children between the ages of three and six ("nursery-schools"), the expression used is "pre-school education".

It should be noted that the concept of "day-care" does not apply to the services formerly rendered by traditional "nannies" or "wet-nurses", as these were expected to care for the children who were entrusted to them both day and night.

Services for children under six years of age may be grouped as a whole under the general concept of "child care".

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cording to the country). When it is no longer possible to count on grandparents or other members of the family to look after young children, women who work are obliged, when they become mothers, either to give up their work temporarily or to entrust their children to other people or to specialized institutions (foster-mothers, nurses, day-care centres, etc.), in return, naturally, for payment of the services rendered.

In developing countries, where the economy continues to be based chiefly on agriculture, the needs in this field are usually less acute. However, the situation is changing rapidly, and the care of children whose mothers work outside the home presents increasingly important problems, especially in the urban areas of such countries, and particularly when they arise in the context of poverty. Even in rural areas, there is a seasonal demand (undoubtedly underestimated until now) from working mothers, since traditional means of child care provided within the family are becoming less and less adequate to meet the new educational and cultural criteria accepted by society.

2. Various solutions to solve the problems of child care

It is obvious that the problem of child care is related to the needs of the child him/herself. It is traditionally accepted that most mothers are capable of meeting the basic physical and psychological needs of their children. Therefore, if a mother is obliged to entrust the care of her child to another person or to a specialized institution, that child should manage to find, in the people who care for him or her, if not a substitute for the mother's care at least the means of developing as harmoniously as in his own family circle.

It should not be forgotten, however, that a child does not always find the means of developing harmoniously in his/her own family circle : there are "bad mothers" (or "bad fathers"), and a child from a family which is poor, illiterate, etc., is certainly handicapped in every way as compared with children who are lucky enough to belong to the higher income groups. This has led to the idea that by organizing child care outside the family environment it is possible to provide certain children not only with a substitute

Some statistics :

- In the USA, for the year 1967, 37% of children under the age of 6 years had mothers in the labor force, by 1976 this proportion had increased to 42%.

The enrollment rate of children in child care and preschool programs whose mothers work rose from 18% to almost 35% during the same time period. The enrollment rate for children whose mothers do not work rose from about 12% to about 29%.

- In Bulgaria, in 1975, 14 % of children under the age of 3 were placed in day-care centres, and 76 % of children between the ages of 3 and 6 attended nursery or infant schools.

for maternal care, but even with a better chance of success than their home environment could offer.

The relative merits of the various solutions found to the problem of child care are usually judged in the light of these two types of objective.

There is no doubt that, historically, the first solution tried out was that of a wet-nurse or foster-mother. It is known that this very ancient practice became fairly common in Europe, among well-to-do families, from the seventeenth century onwards. During the nineteenth century the practice began to spread to the less privileged social classes, as women employed in industry, particularly, found it more advantageous to pay a foster-mother than to give up gainful employment to look after their children in the early years of life.

Nowadays, foster care involving complete separation from the mother for a certain period is increasingly considered to amount to abandonment of a child.

In spite of its temporary nature, a separation of this kind is never desirable - except in exceptional circumstances - and its consequences are bound to be negative. It is generally considered that maintenance of a permanent link with the family circle (that is, to return home each evening) is essential to a child's harmonious development.

Priority is therefore given nowadays to the concept of "day-care", the child being entrusted during the day either to a specialized institution ("day-care centre") or to another family ("home placement"). It is customary to contrast these two methods of "day-care", and much has been written comparing their relative merits. In general, it can be said that those authors who uphold the merits of an institutionalized system of child care have in mind chiefly the second of the two objectives mentioned above (to give children from an underprivileged social environment a better chance to develop). On the other hand, those who uphold the merits of "home placement" have in mind rather the first of the two objectives (to provide the child with a substitute for the family circle, and more

Since the official policy in this country is now to encourage mothers to take long-term leave (up to three years) after the birth of a child, it is estimated that in the future the percentage of children under 3 placed in day-care centres should be stabilized around 25-30 %.

On the other hand, all children between the ages of 3 and 6 should attend institutions for pre-school education.

- In the People's Republic of China, in urban areas , half the children under the age of 3 were placed in day care centres in 1971, and more than 80 % of children between 3 and 6 attended nursery school.

For the rural areas of the country, no really valid statistical data are available.

especially maternal care).

The objective of the child's personal development, however, is only the first of the criteria for evaluation of systems of child care. The authors of literature on the subject (or those responsible for official policies) take into account explicitly and consciously to varying degrees at least three other criteria, whose decisive rôle varies according to the particular conditions in each country. These are :

- the health implications of each system ;
- their ideological implications ;
- their economic implications.

3. The child's development

A large number of surveys have been made to study the way in which a child develops according to whether he is brought up in the close family circle, placed in a day-care centre, or entrusted to a family other than his own during the day.

These surveys confirm the conclusion already reached intuitively, namely that the best results are usually obtained when a child is cared for in the close family circle, provided however that the family's socio-economic level is sufficiently high.

The results obtained in day-care centres are very variable according to the quality of the services provided. The technical quality of the facilities (space available, the educational value of the material provided, etc.) certainly plays a very important role in this connexion, but the decisive factor is the professional competence of the staff to whom the children are entrusted.

When the services provided are of good enough quality, placement in a day-care centre, from the point of view of psychomotor and intellectual development (including the acquisition of language) gives results very similar to those obtained in the im-

The disadvantages of "compartmentalized" administration

It goes without saying that a child's development must be considered as a whole, in the sense that physical development, intellectual development, and emotional growth are all interdependent variables.

Consequently, it would be desirable for all activities concerned with child care to be integrated.

Unfortunately, this is never entirely the case. Such activities almost always come under the administrative responsibility of different ministries or technical departments which have no connexion with one another, thus leading in practice to innumerable difficulties.

In most countries, day-care centres and nursery schools come under different ministries - the former under the Ministry of Health and the latter under the Ministry of Education.

mediate family circle, or even better when the child comes from an underprivileged social environment.

It is obviously more difficult to judge the effects of the various systems that exist on the development of the child's personality and on his mental balance, but it would seem that the results obtained are along the same lines as above.

It is now accepted that an exclusively family upbringing is not without its disadvantages if it has no other outlets. Life outside the family is an experience which is very valuable and even necessary for a child. The day-care centre may well provide the background for this experience, so long as a really warm relationship is built up between the child and the adults who take care of him ; for the latter, this involves not only considerable competence but also certain personal qualities.

Finally, if we consider the effects of home placement, it is generally accepted that it is a more flexible system than placement in a day-care centre, and that it gives an opportunity for a closer and more stable relationship between the child and the adults who look after him.

In day-care centres (and also in nursery schools), a very small number of adults look after a large number of children, with the result that there is a somewhat impersonal relationship between adults and children, and that the latter are obliged to submit to a certain amount of collective discipline.

By comparison, a more personal relationship is established with the adults when a child is placed in a family, even a different one from his own, during the day, and more individual initiative is then required of him.

A number of surveys have shown, on the other hand, that home placement is a less favourable setting than a day-care centre for a child's intellectual development and to help him to learn to speak.

Furthermore, this method of child care frequently leads to

problems of a psychological nature resulting, for example, from the child's mother's jealousy of the family day care provider or that of the care giver's own children, etc.

4. The child's health

It may be questioned whether, in the absence of effective control by the health services, children entrusted to family day care providers can really benefit from conditions of hygiene that are comparable with those offered by the immediate family circle.

In any case, it is certain that the increased risk of infection involved in community life was for a long time a major handicap for day-care centres and other institutions specialized in child care.

With the generalized use of immunization, which has made it possible to solve the problem of communicable diseases (except for frequent and innocuous infections of the upper respiratory tract), this situation has radically changed.

A large number of surveys have shown that nowadays, provided that principles of hygiene are respected strictly enough, and that there is methodical supervision of the children's health, day-care centres offer better health conditions than would be available at home for children from poor families.

For this reason, some day-care centre programmes have been established with the specific aim of counterbalancing the health effects of socio-economic inequalities. In developing countries where some sections of the population are seriously affected by malnutrition, day-care centre programmes often include a nutritional component.

More generally, by making it possible to bring together a large number of children, day-care centres, like schools, provide a favourable setting for all kinds of medical and health activities, such as supervision of growth and development, immunizations, epidemiological surveillance and case detection, health and nutrition

Health, education and child care

Efforts have been made in some countries, in spite of compartmentalized administrative systems, to integrate "health" and "education" components into the programmes of day-care centres.

The programme of "mobile day-care centres" launched in India in 1970 for children whose mothers work on building sites, is an interesting experiment in this connexion, since it has integrated child care services for children under 3, a nursery school for those between 3 and 6, and a primary school for those between 6 and 12.

Doctors and nurses work in coordination with school-teachers and educationalists to provide the best possible conditions for development of the children's physical, intellectual and emotional faculties.

Balanced food rations are distributed to young children suffering from malnutrition, and health establishments have been built especially for them.

Another example worth mentioning is the national programme for community development in Sri Lanka (Sarvodaya Shramadana), which has integrated particularly : nutritional activities ("community kitchens"), day-care centres, pre-school education, cultural services ("children's libraries"), and health services.

education, recording of statistical data, etc. It is thus important to combine day-care centre programmes with other health programmes.

5. Socialization of the child

The family's function is not solely to ensure the development of a child's individual capacities. It is in fact the basic cell of any human society, and as such its function is also to prepare the child for life in society. This is why the family institution also has an ideological role, which is even more decisive than that of educational and religious institutions. The family circle is first of all where the child learns the beliefs, standards, and models of behaviour of the cultural group and the social class to which he is destined to belong.

Since the values passed on by the family are usually in conformity with the established order, those regimes which claim allegiance to a revolutionary ideology often try to counterbalance its influence by using other institutions concerned with children (day-care centres, nursery schools, etc.) to play a comparable ideological role.

It is probable that if all the socialist countries (including China, in spite of its poverty) have made an exceptional effort to set up national programmes for day-care centres and pre-school education, this is chiefly because the leaders of these countries see such programmes as providing a particularly effective means of disseminating revolutionary ideology and creating a "new man". The relevant programmes, indeed, always stress very explicitly the importance of giving young children a political education very early on.

In the rest of the world, on the contrary, objectives of an ideological nature remain quite implicit. It must be admitted, however, that any institution which partially takes the place of the family in the task of bringing up young children necessarily plays an ideological rôle.

Inevitably, through songs, games, the many small tasks of

daily life and the routine of community life, educationalists transmit to the children standards or social values which usually reflect the ideology of the dominant social class.

6. The cost of child care

As long as child care is organized within the traditional circle of the family or with the help of friendly neighbours, it costs nothing. This is of course no longer true once care of the child is sought outside this circle.

It also seems obvious that in this field the natural laws of supply and demand keep the services offered at a comparatively low cost ; for, if the cost of having a child looked after exceeds the amount the mother can hope to earn by working, she would do better to give up her work for the time being.

Unfortunately, good quality child care services cannot be had cheaply.

When, for instance, the objective set for a day-care centre programme is the best possible development of each child's potentialities, the standards that have to be respected with regard to facilities and staff become extremely costly. It is particularly important for the number of educators to be in the right proportion to the number of children and for their professional level to be good. It is equally important to have enough space available, and to have material suited to the needs of the children, etc., and improvement of all these factors makes the costs rise very rapidly. In the case of home placement the initial investments are less than in a day-care centre programme, since there is no need to provide special buildings, but operating costs remain very high if the training and supervision of the foster-mothers responsible for looking after the children are to be organized effectively.

Thus a child care programme, as soon as it meets certain quality criteria, cannot "pay its way" in economic terms. Even programmes in which the clients pay have to be subsidized, for they cannot manage to cover their expenditure.

Cost and financing of the establishment and operation of a day-care centre for 40 children in a rural area

(National report from Thailand to the regional seminar on Health Aspects of Child Care, WHO Regional Office for South-East Asia, 1972).

Budget headings and method of financing	Average cost in US dollars
1. Investment costs	
a) Cost of construction of buildings (funds granted by the Government)	1.000.00
b) Value of supplies and equipment (provided by national and international assistance)	112.50
c) Contributions from the villagers	102.50
d) Study grants for the training of two educators	40.50
- Total investments :	1.255.50
Average investment per child :	31.40
2. Operating costs (per month)	
a) Salaries of two educators	30.00
b) Nutrition programme (protein powder)	4.00
c) Estimated value of fresh food provided by the parents as a contribution	10.00
d) Miscellaneous expenses	1.50
- Total operating costs :	45.50
Monthly operating costs per child :	1.14

And yet many attempts have been made to show that, from the point of view of the rationality of the global economic system, child care programmes end up by showing a credit balance since they can be expected to have certain indirect profits : for instance, the improvement of public health which results from them is likely to lead to a decrease in medical expenditure ; it may also be considered that the efforts devoted to developing the intellectual and physical capacities of young children contribute to making them into individuals who are potentially more productive, etc.

It must be admitted, however, that it is extremely difficult, if not arbitrary, to quantify factors such as these, or even to decide if they should really be taken into account.

7. What should be the basis for establishing a child care programme ?

The arguments put forward to justify whatever solution is chosen to the problem of child care are always based on technical considerations (health, education, child development) or on economics (the cost of the programme). But, as so often happens when a debated question involves social development, the reasons behind the decisions reached are in fact political and ideological in nature.

In socialist countries, for a good many years vast national day-care centre programmes were considered to be justified by an economic rationale : such programmes would help to make available female labour, which was economically profitable. This is a spurious argument, for as we have seen, if day-care centres are obliged to meet sufficiently high standards of quality, the cost of child care becomes higher than the wages that a woman can earn by working. It may therefore be assumed that the unavowed aim of day-care centre programmes is to take women away from their classical rôle of "protector of traditions", and to counterbalance the ideological rôle of the family institution, which is regarded as too traditional.

On the other hand, in industrialized western countries there has always been a certain mistrust of day-care centres, as the rôle of the family in the development of a child's individual capacities is over-emphasized in these countries for exactly the opposite reasons from those described above.

The cost of a day-care centre programme of course depends chiefly on the standards set for facilities and staffing, and it is therefore liable to vary very considerably from one country to another and from one period of time to another.

As an example, the figures given in the above table may be compared with those provided by a survey made in the United States in 1967 by the Department of Labour (Women's Bureau) among the private companies which run day-care centres for their staff.

According to this survey, the average investment costs amounted to US $2 000 * per child - that is, 70 times higher than the corresponding cost in Thailand. Furthermore, the average operating costs per child were between US $1 245 * per annum (US $103.75 per month, or approximately 90 times the corresponding cost for Thailand), and US $2 320 per annum (US $193.30 per month, or 170 times the Thai figure), depending on whether the companies concerned made do with minimum standards or preferred to achieve a high quality level of services. (* Costs as of 1978 are about the same)

Two innovative programmes

(Quotations from ICC's annual report for 1977) :

In certain areas of Colombia, "observation had shown that mothers were not keen on leaving their children in kindergartens as these were too far away, too expensive, and their activities did not fit in with local culture : they preferred to entrust them to neighbours, older relatives, etc. So it was decided to form what amount to cooperatives : the mothers made up teams of six, if possible from the same district (but here the question of mutual confidence and friendship comes in), and one of them agreed to stay at home and look after the children of the other mothers while they worked - in factories, workshops, or domestic employment, etc. Those who work give financial help to the one who looks after their children and who is chosen for her personality and on the basis of certain criteria : she enjoys the confidence of the other mothers, she has a sense of responsibility, and she keeps her home clean. She participates in a practical training course on initiation in child development, and is assisted from the health point of view. She is supervised regularly by an educator who makes sure that the group is properly run, helps the mother to solve problems, assesses progress, and increases her knowledge by introducing her to new ways of keeping the children occupied. Each educator, assisted by the medical officer in charge of the nearest health centre, is responsible for several mothers".

In recent years, however, a new orientation has been given to family policy in most of the socialist countries : allowances for mothers in the home are paid to women to encourage them to give up their work and look after their children themselves during the first few years of life (1 to 3 years). In fact, no serious study has been made to compare the cost of such a policy with the cost of financing a programme of day-care centres, and it would seem that the real objective sought is to increase the birth-rate, which is considered to have fallen too low.

A similar trend appears to be taking place in western countries also, but is more related to the economic recession than to a desire to increase the birthrate.

If the matter is considered without bringing in ideology at all, it must be admitted that since a child care programme has necessarily to be subsidized it leads to redistribution of wealth. In the last analysis, the services concerned are indeed financed in part by taxation. And taxation takes more from the rich than from the poor, and strikes families which have no young children as well as those that have.

Since a policy of family allowances is also basically a policy of redistribution of income, the question is which of the two opposing policies is the more effective. There is indeed no clearcut answer to this question, but it is doubtless possible on this basis to set the optimal objectives of a family policy and to calculate the probable number of children to be received in day-care centres.

This analysis, however, rests entirely on the implicit assumption that child care is of a different nature according to whether it takes place in the setting of the family or of an institution.

Certain comparatively recent experiments seem to refute this assumption, by finding "joint" solutions (neither familial nor institutional) to the problem of child care. In this connexion it is worth mentioning the "playgroups" or "mother-toddler clubs" in Great Britain ; the experiments with "jointly managed day-care centres" in Italy ; the "open day-care centres" (crèches ouvertes) in France ;

- "In Senegal, there are day-nurseries for children in rural areas, started in 1962 at the instigation of the Women's Centre for rural Development, which are open during the two months of intensive cultivation of the rice-fields, a time when infant mortality is at its highest.

"The women responsible for village development activities tried out the experiment of a children's day-nursery with a collective field attached, of which the produce partly covered the cost of the day-nursery. The head of the development centre was in charge of it, and the mothers assumed responsibility for its actual running : - they took turns in supervising and keeping the children occupied, in maintaining the premises and in preparing the midday meal, with each child bringing his own ration of rice ; - they provided the money needed to buy meat, fish and vegetables.

"When the nursery had been running for a year, the mothers realized that it could be something more than merely a practical means of looking after children during a critical season of the year, that it provided better living conditions for the children in the winter season (they had put on weight), and that it served as a school for young mothers. The latter became aware of a number of health and educational requirements with which they had not previously been familiar, and they got into the habit of including notions of sanitation and healthy feeding in their home life, and learnt to draw up and manage a budget. In health matters they came to understand the dangers of infection, the effectiveness of preventive measures, and discovered that children needed to be stimulated and that this was the age when they learnt from experience.

The mothers' participation led to that of the fathers: first their agreement, then their advice, and finally their actual cooperation - construction and equipment of buildings for the day-nursery, collection of small sums of money, toy-making, and working in the collective field."

the "community action, community control" programmes in the United States, etc.

All these experiments, which pre-suppose a certain training effort for the parents (fathers as well as mothers) are part of a vast movement of ideas - of which "self-management" is the key-word - which is characterized by criticism of the trend towards growing institutionalization of services found at all levels (education, health, etc.) in all industrialized societies, whatever the ideology to which they claim allegiance.

It seems that, for different reasons, similar solutions are likely to become necessary in developing countries.

A national day-care centre programme that meets satisfactory standards is probably far beyond the means available in such countries.

Instead of planning vast national day-care centre programmes whose objectives are in any case out of reach, it would thus seem more realistic to assess the minimum needs in this field, and then to encourage the search for other solutions at local level.

Since it is always very costly to institutionalize and pay at market prices services which, in certain circumstances, private citizens are capable of providing to one another free of charge, the least costly strategy in this case would seem to be to educate parents so that they become conscious of the true needs of their children and are thus able to find by themselves, on a community basis, solutions to the problem of child care suited to local conditions.

A strategy such as this implies that countries acquire the necessary methodological means and accept decentralization of the planning process. It may be found particularly suitable if it comes within the general framework of a policy of community development, and child care may also be planned as an integral part of primary health care.

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International Children's Centre

INFANT NURSERIES

AND DAY CARE

PS 012332

A DOCUMENT FOR MASS MEDIA SPECIALISTS

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FACTS:

IDEALLY YOUNG CHILDREN

UNDER THREE

NEED INDIVIDUAL CARE

IN THEIR FAMILIES.

BUT

1. Family structures are changing ;

2. The extended family of different generations living close together and supporting one is another breaking down ;

3. The nuclear family is isolated and needs support ;

4. Single parent families are on the increase ;

5. More women are looking for part time or full time work ;

6. In developing countries, the demand for day care is increasing since traditional means of child care are seen as less adequate to meet the new educational and cultural criteria of society ;

7. The present organisation of work means that parenthood and a job are hard to mix.

SO

Day care of young children in institutions or with families other than their own has developed as one solution.

NEVERTHELESS

INDIVIDUAL FAMILY CARE IS THE IDEAL AGAINST WHICH ANY SOLUTION TO CHILD CARE MUST BE MEASURED.

WHAT ARE THE IMPORTANT CRITERIA FOR DAY CARE ?

1. It must provide a substitute for the care received inside the family circle so that the child can develop as a harmonised whole.

2. Some children do not thrive inside families which are functioning inadequately due to social conditions.

   For these, day care must provide a better chance !

Although the development of the whole child is the single most important objective other criteria are often taken into account when a system of day care is developed.

These are :

- Health
- Ideology
- Cost

CHARACTERISTICS OF DAY CARE

IN DAY CARE CENTRES	IN HOME THE PLACEMENT
1. Effect on child development	
Decisive factor is competence of staff. When services are of good quality, motor and intellectual development gives results similar to family care.	Of variable quality, and in many cases less favorable for child's intellectual development.
Usually large numbers of children to small numbers of adults leads to impersonal relationships and collective discipline.	More opportunity for personal and stable relationship with adult. More individual initiative required of child.
	Sometimes problem of jealousy between mother and day mother and between children resulting in psychological problems for child.
2. Health	
Can be more easily supervised. Immunization programmes are now overcoming the increased risk of catching communicable diseases.	Hard to supervise health standards.
Health and education need to be integrated.	

India shows that this can be overcome as has the National Programme for Community Development in Sri Lanka.

3. Ideology

Many socialist countries set up national day care programmes to disseminate political ideology at the youngest age.

Any institution which partially replaces the family must play some ideological rôle but in most other countries it is not an explicit rôle of the day care offered.

4. Cost

The best day care is very costly.	Less costly
Initial investment is high.	Low initial investment.
Operating costs are high.	Operating cost about the same as for centres.
Since day care is subsidised through taxation it leads to some redistribution of wealth	

Full scale day care meeting all needs is not a feasible solution for poorer countries.

ALTERNATIVE SOLUTIONS :

A policy of family allowances making it less important for the mother to have to work.

JOINT SOLUTIONS :

where parents play a keyrole in the care provided :

Italy	has jointly managed day care centres,
Senegal	has day nurseries where mothers assumed responsibility for its running,
France	has "crèches ouvertes",
Columbia	has developed mothers'cooperatives,
U.S.A.	has community action / community control programmes,
Great Britain	has "playgroups" and mother and toddler clubs.

They all represent a movement towards 'self management' which is characterized by a trend to reject and criticize institutionalised services of all kinds.

They have in common :

1. Parents who must be aware of the true needs of their young children

2. They meet these needs at a local community level.

This is an important trend because full scale day care programmes are too expensive to develop - and it is more realistic to assess the minimum needs and encourage solutions at local levels.

WHAT CAN THE MEDIA DO ?

- Open up the debate of what the needs of young children and their parents really are in your country.

- Examine various solutions which have been tried in other countries.

- Encourage discussion of the aspects of these which are desirable and those which are not.

International Children's Centre 1980

INFANT NURSERIES AND DAY CARE

A DOCUMENT FOR NURSES, MIDWIVES, SOCIAL WORKERS, TEACHERS AND PARENTS

PS012332

DAY-CARE OF YOUNG CHILDREN

In both industrialized and developing societies, with the evolution of the status of women, a growing number of mothers with young children are leaving their homes each day to work outside. Many women continue to work after their maternity leave is over, often from economic necessity. Others choose to take up their professional work again in order to lead balanced lives and develop their personal maturity. In all these cases the problem of care of their children arises.

Nowadays much progress has been made in facilitating the care of children when both their parents work, but further precautions are needed to ensure that a child's development takes place in the best possible conditions, and that the adults who look after him help his personality to unfold. Also, in most countries the number of places available in day-care centres is not adequate to meet the needs, and it is very often not possible to choose the solution best suited to a child's circumstances, needs, and temperament.

Duration of maternity leave after delivery

- Austria, Belgium	: 8 weeks
- Canada	: 6 weeks
- Czechoslovakia	: 22 weeks
- Denmark, Spain, Finland	: 8 weeks
- France	: 10 weeks
- German Democratic Rep.	: 22 weeks
- German Federal Rep.	: 8 to 12 weeks
- Great Britain	: 29 weeks
- Greece	: 8 weeks
- Hungary	: 20 weeks
- India	: 6 to 8 weeks
- Ireland	: 6 weeks
- Italy	: 12 weeks
- Luxembourg	: 8 weeks
- Netherlands	: 6 weeks
- Norway	: 12 weeks
- Sweden	: 9 months (parental leave which can be shared between the mother and the father)
- Switzerland	: 8 weeks
- USA	: varies from State to State
- USSR	: 8 weeks

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It is therefore essential for the parents to decide well in advance on the type of care they will adopt, and to begin preparing for this first separation. It is not too early to discuss it during pregnancy, and in fact this gives the parents the time to think about it and to find out about the various kinds of day-care available, with their respective advantages and disadvantages, for instance from the social services in the locality or from the municipal authorities. A child cannot be entrusted to others on the spur of the moment !

Day-care of young children

If this is not easy for the parents, for emotional reasons and because of the organizational problems involved, it is even harder for a young child to leave his parents, and especially his mother. Whatever solutions are considered, it is important to remember that the child's well-being is at stake.

It is often difficult to find a suitable solution which safeguards the interests both of the parents and of the child, but it is essential that the child should not be sacrificed to professional, economic, and social requirements. A balance must be found which takes into account working hours, the distance between the home and the place where the child is looked after, the family budget, and the temperament of each person concerned.

Before reviewing possible solutions, we need to find the answer to a vital question :

At what age should a child be entrusted to others ?

The answer is : neither too early nor too late : as soon as maternity leave is over, that is, usually 3 months after birth, or in any case before the age of 6 months. Many studies have shown that it is important for an infant to experience external care before this age, and in any case before the age of 8 months, which is a period when separation causes distress. Separation is the most distressing between the ages of 8 and 18 months. This is an essential concept to be borne in mind by legislators before they reach any decision on the extension of maternity leave.

According to United Nations estimates, there were 515 million gainfully employed women in the world in 1970 (representing one-third of the world's labour force), the proportion in developed countries (38 %) being hardly more than in developing countries (32 %). For 1980, a figure of approximately 600 million is quoted, and the estimate for the year 2000 is 842 million ; by then, the total female labour force in developing countries will have exceeded the total labour force in the world at the present time.

SOME STATISTICS

In France, out of slightly more than 2 million children under the age of 3, more than half are looked after at home :

1 100 000 by their mother who stays at home ;
80 000 by an employee in the home ;
800 000 are looked after outside the home :

100 000 by a member of the family (grandmother, sister-in-law, aunt, etc.) ;
55 000 - 60 000 in community day-care centres ;
35 000 in family day-care centres ;
600 000 by foster mothers, now known as mother's helps ;
200 000 children attend nursery school from the age of 2 onwards (that is, 27 % of the child population of this age).

If the mother has preferred or has been able to look after her child herself during the first year of its life, it is better to wait a few more months before placing it, especially outside the home; this should only be done when the relationship with the mother is sufficiently interiorized for the child to be able to be away from her for a whole day without experiencing the distress of abandonment (after the age of 18-20 months).

Whatever the child's age, the separation must be prepared for, both by the parents and by the child, who must all gradually get used to the new way of life, accept it inwardly, and do everything possible to ensure that the placement is a success. A failure is always harmful for the child, who feels it keenly. It increases the misgivings and anxiety of the parents, and the risk of failure if another attempt is made.

To entrust one's child to someone else is not an abandonment. The parents have to feel responsible and play their role to the full; this is important in the relationship between them and the person who is given chief responsibility for caring for the child.

There must be good coordination, cohesiveness, and educational consistency between the different places where the child lives : this principle was recently emphasized strongly by a specialist on child development, during a seminar held by UNESCO in 1979 : "The development potential of a given context increases proportionately to the number and kind of links existing between this place and other places where the child, or people responsible for him, live". - U. Bronfenbrenner.

When a child is entrusted to the grandmother, the latter may, consciously or unconsciously, try to take precedence. For her the child's mother is first and foremost her daughter, that is, still a child, and will always remain so; she may well treat her as such in front of the baby, thus making the mother's educational role more difficult, and also causing many difficulties and even conflicts.

It is also for the parents to choose, as far as this is possible, the type of care which is best suited to the needs, the

How should preparations be made for this separation ? For instance, by taking the child to visit the new place where he is going to live part of the time, by letting him get to know the people who are going to look after him, so that the place and the people become familial, and are a source of pleasure. Such visits may be repeated several times, and the mother may even leave the child for a while in his new environment, so that first of all for a few hours and then for a longer time the child goes through the experience of waiting for his mother ... and then having her back.

Another way of preparing a child is to make him feel at home. The first time he is taken to his new surrounding, it is important to reproduce to some extent his usual surroundings. This can be done by bringing along some familiar things, his toys, his blanket, etc., to emphasize the continuity, rather than the break, in his different "ways of life".

age, and the temperament of their child. They alone should decide what is best for him, but they may find it helpful to consult specialists - a paediatrician, a child welfare worker, a psychologist, or a social worker, for instance - to help them in their choice. It should be borne in mind that a child has at least three essential needs :

- to be loved for his own sake;
- to feel trust around him and feel safe;
- to find continuity in the care he receives.

THE VARIOUS TYPES OF DAY-CARE

1. At home

1.1. by the mother : It may be considered that there is not much to be said about day-care of children at home, especially when they are looked after by their mother. But we should not jump to conclusions. Women who stay at home to bring up their children do so from choice, or from necessity. Information received from many sources indicates that mothers at home begin to feel lonely fairly quickly, and would like to be able to leave their children part of the time in some safe place nearby. This happens even more in big cities. "Day-nursery care" and "tiny-tots' clubs", etc., can take some of the burden off the mother if they are close enough to her home and not too expensive. This shows that two different types of day-care may complement each other and not necessarily clash with each other.

1.2. by a member of the family or a paid employee : Children looked after at home by a paid employee or a member of the family (grandmother, aunt, cousin, etc.) do not have to go from place to place : the continuity of their environment gives stability. If they are ill they do not have to be moved; there is less risk of fatigue and of catching cold. On the other hand, they know two different women in the same place - their mother and the person who looks after them - and this often causes rivalry. Here again it is important to learn to communicate, so that each person knows exactly where she fits in and

In some apartment buildings or housing-estates outside towns, young mothers or domestic helps spend twelve hours a day cut off from all community life, alone with young babies while all the rest of the population goes away to school or to work. The fact that a women has had a child, or wishes to earn her living by looking after other people's children, does not automatically imply that she has perfect knowledge of the child's needs or that she knows how to keep him occupied. It would be important for young parents to meet together and exchange ideas and thoughts ; by sharing experience of their problems and of solutions found, they not only feel a kindred spirit but also discover more flexible and more rewarding methods of bringing up their children, from which the latter are the first to benefit.

The extended family in developing countries obviously provides many different forms of "mother-substitute". The problem of day-care when the mother is not available - working in the fields, for instance - is automatically solved. But migration to urban areas breaks down these traditional structures, and when women work far away from the family compound or community land, a need for day-care arises : at the present time the few solutions found to this problem are too often of doubtful quality.

what her responsibilities are, and also so that the children can make no mistake about it either.

A child who is looked after at home without meeting young playmates may lack stimulation and opportunities for matching his budding personality with those of his peers. There must thus be continuous vigilance so that the partners in this relationship enjoy being together and find opportunities for individual adventures. It is also important to arrange for the child to meet others of the same age, either at home or outside.

2. Outside the home

2.1. Children looked after by a member of the family usually spend the day in that person's home. They are therefore subjected to leaving home early in the morning and returning at the end of the day. They also very soon experience the difficulties and differences of opinion between the various people who look after them. But this solution is often economical and satisfactory.

2.2. Community day-care centres : are intended for the care of healthy children between the ages of two months and three years, during the day while both their parents work. These children are looked after by qualified personnel (a child welfare worker, auxiliary child welfare worker, or educator for young children) who, apart from giving them physical care and keeping them clean, watch over them vigilantly and treat them with affection.

Many countries have made great efforts to provide facilities in this field, particularly since the second world war.

Community day-care centres, both those organized by firms - in the mother's place of work - and those in the district where the mother lives, are becoming increasingly modern and well equipped. Some of them, in fact, are a real children's paradise.

Particularly in terms of quantity (an insufficient number of places) and of coverage of the needs (inadequate geographi-

WHO has estimated the need for places in day-care centres at 70 to 80 per 10 000 population ; this is also the norm set in Poland, for example. The City of Stockholm provides 60 places per 10 000 population.

The falling birth rate and ageing of the population have caused industrialized countries to lower these figures. In spite of this, however, the number of places available remains inadequate in many places.

cal distribution), the situation leaves much to be desired in many countries. Very many parents are obliged to look elsewhere, in spite of their definite preference for this type of day-care and none other. It follows that, from the start, they will not necessarily be satisfied with what they find.

3. Family day-care centres

These centres take in children of the same age-group, but they are located in the home of the person responsible, often known as a "mother's help". A supervisor is responsible for the recruitment and training of mothers' helps, and for surveillance and health protection of the children. Such centres are run in an even more flexible way, particularly as far as their hours are concerned; within reasonable limits these can be arranged individually between the parents and the mother's help. They are also flexible about the admission of sick children. It is also possible for a child to spend the night at the home of the mother's help should the need arise from time to time.

This flexibility, and the limited number of children entrusted to a family day-care centre, result in a more informal and welcoming atmosphere in which children who are liable to suffer from separation and community life feel more at home and have a better chance of developing harmoniously. There is therefore a tendency for this solution to become more widespread in many countries.

4. Nursery schools and kindergartens

These are in principle intended for older children (between the ages of 3 and 6). In fact, however, admission is possible at an earlier age in some countries, a development facilitated by the current drop in the birth-rate.

5. Day-nursery care

They take in children under the age of 6 during the day, discontinuously. The children are admitted on a non-routine basis for a few hours a day. For a child between the ages of 2 months and 3 years, brought up by a parent or a member of the family, such cen-

The situation is obviously even less satisfactory in developing countries, where the few day-care centres that there are are concentrated in big cities, charge fees (and are thus reserved for a small minority), and are usually copied from Western models, which means that they do not meet the cultural needs of the children. Valid solutions can only be found, and applied generally, by using innovative methods that have no connexion with those used in traditional day-care centres, and that depend heavily on community participation.

Family day-care centres are obviously less expensive from the point of view of the initial outlay, but their running costs are just as high as those of community day-care centres.

In some countries, day-care centres, day nursery care, and nursery schools are all part of one integrated structure : "The early childhood centre".

tres are ideal for meeting a small group of other children and adults, with a team of qualified staff. They also enable the parent who is customarily responsible for child to be free for a few hours to do some shopping, run an errand, or have a professional activity, knowing that the child is safely looked after.

6. Clandestine day-care

In the absence of other arrangements, day-care of children is still frequently arranged by mutual agreement between the parents and the unregistered, unqualified, and unsupervised substitute mothers : this is known as "unauthorized" or clandestine day-care, and is often of doubtful quality. Conflicts often arise between the substitute mother and the parents with regard to money, the quality of the care given, or time schedules ; they lead to bad relations between the parents and the substitute mother, and to lack of stability in the care of the child which is detrimental to his well-being.

Day-care centres and the socialization of children

The chief aim of day-care centres should be to promote the mental health, the personal equilibrium, and the intellectual and social development of young children, while at the same time creating a balanced and rewarding relationship between the staff and the parents and also among staff, parents and children. This is in fact what happens in many day-care centres of a high standard.

Group decision-making is the basis of life in a day-care centre, and shows how the children are treated. They are encouraged to decide for themselves, to become independent, and to behave as active and cooperative members of the group. Even at this age a child can learn to develop his social behaviour. If a child starts crying, other children can learn to come and comfort and help him : to be comforted by other children is very effective, and is sometimes more appreciated than to be comforted by adults.

At this age, children can learn to face most of their conflicts by themselves. The day-care centre worker thus prefers to watch from a distance how the conflict is settled, and only intervenes if this is necessary.

Clandestine day-care often leads to dramatic situations, for instance if the child meets with an accident and the substitute mother is not insured, or if he is the victim of abuse.

In the United States, however, the majority of child care arrangements are made informally with friends, neighbors or relatives. The behaviour relationship is the basis for trust, confidence and assurance of proper care.

Daily life in a day-care centre in the Netherlands

Although there is no fixed plan for each day's activities, there is a certain routine. The following is the daily programme for children of 2 years and over.

They arrive at the centre between 8 and 9.30 a.m., and play freely until 9.45 or 10 a.m. They do what they like (climbing, playing with paper, etc.) ; the person in charge looks on, helps if need be, and gives a little more attention to children who need it.

After that the rooms are tidied up, and preparations are made for the fruit-juice interval, a ceremony accompanied by songs, poems, and stories. The fruit-juice and biscuits are on the table which is surrounded by the children, and sometimes 20 minutes are spent in singing, for instance, before eating and drinking.

Group activities are then organized (games to develop motor function, musical sense, ideas, and perception), as well as other creative activities such as painting, cutting-out, etc. The main criterion for keeping up an activity is the pleasure taken in it by the children and the people looking after

Development of independence is balanced by a warm and affectionate relationship between the children and those who look after them. There is a great deal of physical contact. The day-care centre worker often sits on the floor with the children and creates close contact, for instance by reading a story to a group of 3 or 4 children.

With a few rare exceptions, the staff do not tolerate physical aggression among the children. On the other hand, minor forms of verbal aggression are tolerated so that the children may express their anger and indignation. Verbal communication is indeed encouraged between the children, the staff and the parents, within each group, and between one group and another.

Parents and the day-care centre

There must be free and frequent contact between parents and staff, with occasional more formal meetings on a definite subject. The mothers must be able to participate in the daily activities of the centre if they can and if they so wish. The parents must be aware of what is going on with regard to daily routine, cleanliness, feeding, and education. But the staff should avoid being domineering and giving parents the impression that they are "the people who know what is good for a child" : this would result - particularly for young parents or those from a modest sociocultural background - in inferiority complex, jealousy, or on the other hand in their relinquishing their responsibility.

If it has been possible to establish a relationship of confidence, the mother will not hesitate to discuss with the staff of the day-care centre her problems, her difficulties, or eventual family conflicts. The head of the centre - well trained in psychology, educational methodology, and social work - will then be able to help the parents or direct them to other professional workers if need be. Thus a true relationship of confidence can be built up, centred around the child, which will be most beneficial for the latter.

them. These activities take place in small groups of 4 to 10 children. There must be a balance between the fixed timetable and the time given to new and spontaneous activities.

These activities last for 15 - 30 minutes, and the children may then once more play as they please for half an hour. Lunch is served at noon, and the children who come for the morning only then leave the centre. Most of the children who stay for the whole day lie down for a rest until 2.30 p.m. The others play or go for a walk. This is followed by another interval for fruit-juice, then about 30 minutes of planned activities. After that the children play as they please until their parents come to fetch them. Sometimes they go to the zoo, to a museum, or for a walk in a park.

FRANCE 1976 Day-care of children whose mothers work (INED)		Father's socio-professional category			
		Manual worker %	Employee %	Middle level prof. staff %	Senior prof. staff %
At home	By the mother	11	6	6	5
	By domestic staff	2	2	7	25
	By a member of the family	12	11	5	7
Outside the home	By a member of the family	30	21	22	11
	By a foster-mother	36	45	45	38
	In a day-care centre	6	8	12	8
Other		3	7	3	6
Total		100	100	100	100

Type of day-care and family health : how to make the best choice

All methods of day-care do not have the same effects on the child. It is a false problem to discuss the relative merits of day-care by the mother and organized day-care. The collective and individual necessity for women to work is an established sociological fact which is doubtless irreversible. There is, however, no doubt that in infancy a child needs above all the care of his mother, and that the organization of women's work - particularly extension of the duration of post-natal maternity leave - and of different types of day-care must take this into account and do everything possible to encourage, in time and in quality, the child's contact with his mother and his close family circle. But day-care should also be considered as "a means of meeting the needs of young children in the context of a civilization in evolution", in the words of a working group which met in France in 1972 to study types of day-care of children between the ages of 0 and 3 years.

Among the conclusions of this group, the following are particularly noteworthy : "A child needs surroundings which provide him with stimulation and opportunities to learn, but this can only have an impact and be effective - that is, contribute to the child's development in the best possible way - if from the start two essential conditions have been provided for and maintained :

1° that the child should have established and be able to maintain his basic relationship with his mother and his family, who should be sufficiently available ; the concrete reality and continuity of this relationship must be kept up during the first few years of life ;

2° that care is taken to ease, if not eliminate, the many tensions and frustrations involved in the very conditions of day-care on the one hand, and on the other to reduce the repercussions of day-care on the relationship of the mother to her child and of the child to his mother".

The type of day-care most often adopted is that outside the home by a person who is not a member of the family, followed by care outside the home by a member of the family. Senior professional staff prefer day-care at home, whereas middle-level professional staff tend to have recourse to day-care centres.

There is no such thing as a ranking of types of day-care : each type has its special uses and advantages according to the need. A child who is surrounded by affection in his family will draw the maximum benefit from the stimulating conditions in a day-care centre and from the socialization that it provides. A child whose family is less close-knit, or who is often ill, or whose mother has irregular hours of work, will be happier with a mother's help.

The ideal arrangement is to have a wide choice of possibilities, and to be able to switch easily from one to another when the need arises.

This implies that in practice there should indeed be a choice. It is therefore important to continue present efforts to provide more facilities, at the same time improving the recruitement, training and status of staff responsible for the day-care of children, and giving mothers wider scope for bringing up their children themselves without giving up their personal life or sacrificing their professional life.

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